

Washington, DC - Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA), chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, today praised the foreign policy acumen and skills of Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) as he named him the new vice-chair of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue.

“Jim Costa's interest in foreign policy is profound, and he makes a great contribution to our work on the Foreign Affairs Committee,” Lantos said. “I am convinced that he is the right person to help lead this most important inter-parliamentary exchange program. He will do us all proud.”

The Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue brings together members of the U.S. Congress and members of the European Parliament twice a year to discuss issues ranging from terrorism to energy independence, immigration, education and how to expand commerce and trade. These exchanges are held on both sides of the Atlantic; the next event is this spring, and will take place in Berlin since Germany currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the European Union.

“It is extremely important at this time in our nation's history that the Congress maintain excellent working relationships with the legislatures of our allies,” Costa said. “Chairman Lantos' confidence in my ability to contribute to this undertaking is most gratifying. I look forward to representing the Congress in expanding our dialogue with other federal legislative bodies.”

The grandson of Portuguese immigrants, Costa represents California's 20th Congressional District, located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. He was elected to Congress in 2004 following a 24-year career as a member of the California state Legislature. In addition to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where he is a member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia and the Subcommittee on Europe, Costa serves on the House Agriculture Committee and House Natural Resources Committee and chairs the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.

Costa has wide-ranging experience in exchanging ideas with government leaders from other countries. He met with leaders of Israel, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, and was a member of the first delegation of the U.S. Congress to meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki after the latter took office. In December 2006 he traveled to Rome to discuss trade policy and its impact on

agriculture with leaders of the World Trade Organization.

The aim of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue is to strengthen and enhance the level of discourse between European and American legislators. This cooperation aids in the development of shared approaches to a wide array of issues and helps to prevent disputes in sensitive areas before they occur. Topics covered during previous sessions of the TLD include:

- * Iraq and Afghanistan
- * Energy Security
- * Middle East Peace Process and Lebanon
- * International Terrorism
- * Iran and North Korea's Nuclear Programs
- * Immigration
- * Education
- * Trade

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